

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for forming a slider, comprising:
 - forming a slider body having a first side, a second side, a leading edge and a trailing edge;
 - 5 using at least a first etching to form an air bearing structure on the slider body extending to the trailing edge for providing a desired fly height, and
 - using a last etching to form a non-actuatable, wearable pad on the air bearing structure extending to the trailing edge, the wearable pad extending above the air bearing surface and having a surface area of less than 5% of a total air bearing
 - 10 surface area and a predetermined height so that wearing of the pad during use produces an interference of zero at the desired fly height and provides negligible lift to the slider.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the using at least a first etching to form an air bearing structure further comprises using two etching to form three
- 15 surface levels.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein the using a last etching to form a non-actuatable, wearable pad further comprises forming a fourth surface level.
4. The method of claim 3 wherein the using a last etching to form a non-actuatable, wearable pad further comprises forming the non-actuatable, wearable
- 20 pad around a magnetic sensor.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein the using a last etching to form a non-actuatable, wearable pad further comprises forming a non-actuatable, wearable pad having a predetermined height selected to be greater than or equal to the desired fly

height minus a disk roughness.

6. The method of claim 1 further comprising forming at least one front

air bearing pad.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising forming side rails extending

5 along sides of the support structure.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the non-actuatable, wearable pad is formed of a material selected from the group comprising alumina, TiC/Al₂O₃ and silicon.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the non-actuatable, wearable pad

10 comprises a surface area of less than 3.5% of a total air bearing surface area.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein the non-actuatable, wearable pad comprises a surface area of less than 2% of a total air bearing surface area.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the non-actuatable, wearable pad comprises a surface area of 1% of a total air bearing surface area.

15